**t6787t589United States Department of the Interior**
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: __African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_____
Other names/site number: __Union American Church of Iron Hill; St. Daniel's UAME Church of Iron Hill; St. Daniel's Community Church of Iron Hill (current name)
Name of related multiple property listing**:**
__N/A_____
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

## 2. Location

Street & number: _1578 Whittaker Road_____
City or town: _Newark_____ State: _DE_____ County: _New Castle County_____
Not For Publication: [ ] Vicinity: [X]

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

**___national ___statewide __X_local**
Applicable National Register Criteria:

**__X_A ___B __X_C ___D**

| |
|---|
| **Signature of certifying official/Title:** **Date** |
| **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government** |

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

**Signature of commenting official:** **Date**

**Title :** **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Private: | X |
| Public – Local | |
| Public – State | |
| Public – Federal | |

### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Building(s) | X |
| District | |
| Site | |

Structure ☐

Object ☐

**Number of Resources within Property**
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | | buildings |
| 1 | | sites |
| | | structures |
| | | objects |
| 3 | 0 | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

---

**6. Function or Use**
**Historic Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions.)
RELIGION/religious facility
FUNERARY/cemetery

**Current Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions.)
RELIGION/religious facility
FUNERARY/cemetery

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**
(Enter categories from instructions.)
__MIXED _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete, Asbestos, Asphalt

**Narrative Description**
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

**Summary Paragraph**

African Union Church of Iron Hill, also known historically as Union American Church of Iron Hill, St. Daniel's U.A.M.E. Church of Iron Hill, and now called St. Daniel's Community Church of Iron Hill, is a mid-nineteenth century vernacular religious building located in Iron Hill, Pencader Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware. Constructed between 1852 and 1856, the church is a one-and-a-half story, three-bay, frame building clad in asbestos shingles, painted brick red, which covers historic wood weatherboard. It rests on a rubble fieldstone foundation, which is covered by white aluminum siding. The front-gable roof is sheathed in asphalt shingles. There are two early-twentieth century frame additions, including a vestibule at the front and a choir box at the rear. The church is situated in a clearing within a wooded area near the base of Iron Hill. Set back from the west side of Whittaker Road and to the north of its intersection with Old Baltimore Pike, the building has a somewhat oblique orientation to the road. A gravel parking lot and mid-twentieth century social hall are situated closer to Whittaker Road, to the east and northeast, respectively. A small cemetery, with marked and unmarked burials, is located on the hillside to the north of the church, with the oldest known burials adjacent to the building. Built before the U.S. Civil War and emancipation, African Union Church of Iron Hill is the oldest known surviving Peter Spencer/U.A.M.E. church building in New Castle County and the

earliest known extant example of rural Black religious architecture in New Castle County. Although many materials have been replaced throughout its history, a large percentage of the changes occurred during the church's period of significance, and it retains high levels of integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, feeling, and association.

## Narrative Description

*Setting*

African Union Church of Iron Hill is located near the base of the southwest side of Iron Hill. It stands on the west side of Whittaker Road, which runs from north to south over Iron Hill, connecting Old Baltimore Pike on the south to Welsh Tract Road on the north. East of where the church is situated, Whittaker Road jogs to the southeast to cross a small unnamed stream that flows into Muddy Run. The stream runs to the south of Iron Hill and the church. The area surrounding the church is heavily forested. Most of Iron Hill is now New Castle County parkland with hiking and biking trails. Iron Hill School No. 112C (NR# 95001032), constructed in the early 1920s to serve the local Black community, stands a short distance to the southeast. There is some suburban development and increasing encroachment of large homes along Whittaker Road, but the larger lot sizes and trees obscure many of the houses from the church. The church building stands in a clearing in the woods with the primary elevation facing east. Due to the bend in Whittaker Road as it approaches the stream crossing, the church has an oblique orientation to the road. A gravel parking lot and driveway are located east of the church, between it and the road. The social hall stands to the north side of the driveway and closer to Whittaker Road. The south and west sides of the church are bordered by woods growing on the relatively flat ground surrounding the stream, while the cemetery is located on the hill to the north side of the church. The oldest known graves are located adjacent to the church, with mid-twentieth century burials near the north end of the churchyard, and the most recent burials to the northwest of the building. Many of the older graves are unmarked.

*East Elevation (Front)*

The primary façade has symmetrical fenestration with a projecting one-story vestibule addition spanning the front of the original block. The vestibule has a poured concrete foundation that has been largely covered with white aluminum siding. The original main block and the vestibule have front-gable roofs clad in asphalt shingles, with the pitch of the vestibule roof being more shallow than that of the main block. The vestibule features a pair of plain metal doors painted red with plain white trim. Above the doors, a small glass-fronted cabinet encloses a paper sign with the name of the church, times of worship services and bible study, and the name of the pastor. Floodlights are mounted under the gable above the sign. Above the vestibule roof, the original block of the church has a wide band of white aluminum flashing. In the gable end is a one-over-one, double-hung sliding sash vinyl window with aluminum trim, with a glass light set in a triangular wood frame above the window. A white cross is mounted on the side of the building beneath the gable. The eaves have slight returns covered in white aluminum.

At the northeast corner of the vestibule, a white marble date stone is mounted in a wooden frame. The stone is inscribed:

ST. DANIELS
1838 1927
U.A.M.E. CHURCH

Based on current research, the years on the date stone seem to indicate the formation of the congregation in 1838 and the reconsecration of the church as St. Daniel's in 1927.[1] Upon initial inspection, the inscription on the stone appears to be "A.M.E." as the "U." is difficult to read, all but completely worn away and covered with layers of paint. However, the congregation was not affiliated with the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), which was founded by freedman Richard Allen in Philadelphia in 1816 but was instead then part of the Union American Methodist Episcopal Church (UAME). The existence of the "U." is also evident in the spacing of the full inscription, with the three lines only balanced and centered with the "U." included.

*North Elevation*
The original block of the church is symmetrical with three bays, although the one-story vestibule and rear choir box additions on the east and west elevations have made the overall elevation asymmetrical. The rear addition has a concrete block foundation with a vent into the crawl space. There is a seam between the two westernmost windows of the sanctuary where there used to be a flue for a stove, with the stove jack visible, though covered. The vestibule has a small one-over-one-light, sliding sash vinyl window with aluminum trim. The original block has three larger one-over-one light, sliding sash vinyl windows with aluminum trim. The three windows each have fixed triangular wood windows above the sliding sashes. The triangular windows have wood muntins dividing the glass panes into three triangles surrounding a rectangle, with aluminum trim.

*West Elevation*
The one-story, rear choir box addition spans the full west elevation of the original block and is sheltered by a hipped roof clad in asphalt shingles. Similar to the east elevation, the roof of the original block has slight returns covered in white aluminum. The west elevation exhibits asymmetrical fenestration consisting of two windows—one at the center and one to the north—covered with vertical wood boards. The tops of the windows abut the eaves. The concrete block foundation also has a vent into the crawl space.

*South Elevation*
The fenestration is the same as the north elevation, except there is a single metal door in the rear choir box addition, painted red with plain white aluminum trim, with a set of wood steps and a single wood railing. This door previously provided access to an outhouse standing nearby in the woods. The foundations of the original block and vestibule are not covered in aluminum siding, leaving the vestibule's poured concrete foundation exposed. The original block's rubble fieldstone foundation is parged, except for a small area near the easternmost sanctuary window.

[1] After its incorporation in 1868 as a UAME church until the early 1930s, it was generally referred to as the "UAME Church at Iron Hill" (or similar phrasing) in newspaper articles currently available through Newspapers.com. The first known reference specifically to St. Daniel's is found in a news brief titled "Shorter's A.M.E." published on January 16, 1932, in Wilmington's *Evening Journal*.

*Interior*

There are two main areas inside the church: the vestibule and the sanctuary. The sanctuary is accessed through the vestibule, which is located at the east (front) end of the building. The choir box addition on the west end of the building is a part of the sanctuary. A balcony is located overhead at the eastern end of the sanctuary.

Historically, the vestibule was a single large room outside of the sanctuary. It has been subdivided into three spaces. The center space remains a vestibule between the sanctuary and outdoors. A room that has been added to the north is now a small office. During repairs in late 2018 (necessitated by a roof leak and subsequent water damage), the western interior wall of the office was partially opened, revealing the eastern (front) exterior wall of the original block of the church. The original exterior wall exhibited visible sash sawn lumber and machine-cut nails, supporting its early 1850s construction date, as well as evidence of a closed-in original window bay. Two bathrooms have been added to the south, opposite the office, and open directly onto the vestibule. The floor of the vestibule has been covered in red carpeting, except for the bathrooms, and the walls are covered in 1970s faux wood paneling that has been painted white. The doors to the office, bathrooms, sanctuary, and exterior are plain with round brass knobs and plain wood trim. There is a pair of doors to the exterior—all other doors are single. The office has a window, while its counterpart on the south elevation of the vestibule has been covered on the interior due to the addition of bathrooms.

The sanctuary is a single room with the nave running from east to west. The altar, pulpit, and choir loft are located at the west end of the sanctuary. The southeast corner contains the sanctuary's only remaining wood pew. The nave is filled with contemporary metal and plush red fabric chairs arranged in rows oriented to face the pulpit, creating an open center aisle. The altar is in front of a dais and behind a wood balustrade with turned balusters and two end newel posts. The balustrade likely dates to around the turn of the twentieth century. The altar is plain oak with a white marble top inscribed with "*THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME*." Two steps on either side of the altar lead up to the pulpit on top of the dais. The plain contemporary wood pulpit is centered behind the altar. Three late-Victorian chairs for church officials stand behind the pulpit, while a piano and a keyboard are located against the north and south walls. An additional step leads up to the rear choir box addition, which is separated from the pulpit by a low wooden wall. The choir box is an open space currently filled with a drum set and chairs for choir members. A door to the exterior is located in the south wall of the choir box. The choir box has a low acoustic tile ceiling. A wood cross draped in fabric is mounted on the back wall of the sanctuary above the choir box.

In the northeast corner, a flight of winder stairs accesses a balcony spanning the easternmost third of the sanctuary, which is supported by two tapered, square columns. An unfinished closet beneath the stairs reveals that the stairs were built using sash sawn lumber and machine-cut nails, further supporting the early 1850s construction date. The balcony is constructed with a floor that slopes slightly downward facing the pulpit. The floor is situated at a height between the top sash and the triangular fixed sash of the two easternmost sanctuary windows. The triangular fixed sashes illuminate the balcony floor, while the single window in the gable end lights the space.

The balcony is also filled with rows of the contemporary metal and plush red fabric chairs. A balustrade with square wood balusters spans the front of the balcony. A simple two-rail banister encloses the top of the stairwell. Unlike the sanctuary, which has a flat plaster ceiling, the balcony has a ceiling covered in bead board, with part of the roof slope exposed to create a greater ceiling height. The side of the dropped sanctuary ceiling is also clad in bead board.

The sanctuary and balcony have many of the same interior finishes. Both have red carpeting and walls clad with 1970s faux wood paneling painted white. The ceilings and wood trim are also painted white. The sanctuary has four pendant lights flanking two ceiling fans mounted over the center aisle, with an additional ceiling fan above the center of the balcony.

*Social Hall,* (contributing)
The social hall is a one-story, three-bay, frame building constructed from two chicken coops that were moved from Iron Hill Poultry Farm (also known as the Salminen Poultry Farm) to the site and reconfigured in the mid-1960s.[2] It has a side-gable roof sheathed in asphalt shingles and sits on a concrete block foundation painted a blue-gray. The walls are clad in vertical wood tongue-in-groove siding painted white. On both the south and west elevations, two windows flank center doors. The windows are six-over-six-light, double-hung sliding vinyl sashes with plain wood trim. The south door is aluminum with nine lights over two panels, while the west door is a six-panel aluminum door. Both doors are white with plain wood trim.

The two chicken houses, which became the social hall, were integral to the continued use of the church and contribute to the property's historical importance. Prior to their installment and renovation of the buildings, the church had no dedicated social space for Sunday school, church dinner fundraisers, or a community meeting space. The addition of the social hall to the landscape reflects the evolving needs of its vital congregation.

*Cemetery,* (contributing)[3]
The cemetery is located on the hillside to the north of the church and west of the social hall, containing approximately two dozen marked graves and numerous unmarked graves. The graves are loosely laid out in rows from north to south with the gravestones facing east or west. The oldest stones, dating to the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, stand near the north wall of the church. Several stones bear the names of multiple family members. The area further north is predominantly filled with unmarked graves, plus a large cedar tree and several bushes. A few gravestones in this section date to the mid-twentieth century. At the north end of the churchyard, there are gravestones from the 1970s and 1980s, as well as the Green family plot at

[2] The exact location of this farm is not known. However, advertisement for the sale of an adjacent property references the Iron Hill Poultry Farm in 1949, and helps us understand the vicinity the farm was located in. It states that the farm for sale is "¾ mile west of Cooch's Bridge on the Tenfoot Road next to Iron Hill Poultry farm three miles south of Newark." "Public Sale of Real and Personal Property," *The News Journal*, Wilmington, Delaware, September 15, 1949.
[3] Names and dates are derived from an interview of Donna Johnson, church historian for St. Daniel's Community Church of Iron Hill, conducted by Catherine Morrissey, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, September 28, 2020, as well as from gravestones in the cemetery.

the northeast corner of the cemetery, which is marked by four corner stones and may date to earlier in the twentieth century. The most recent burials from the 1990s through the 2010s are located to the northwest of the church, towards the back of the cemetery. Most of the gravestones are simple granite or marble markers with little ornamentation. A few of the late-twentieth century stones are carved with hearts or religious iconography like crosses, doves, and bibles. There are also three military-issued gravestones belonging to congregation members including Private Frederick Wright, who served in the Civil War; Private Herman Wellington Taylor, who served in World War I; and Private Willard F. Earl, who served in World War II.

Numerous unmarked burials are located throughout the cemetery, many evidently intermingling with older gravestones while others are likely situated to the west (rear) of the church in a clearing. Those interred at Iron Hill are known by congregants to be members of the handful of interrelated and connected family groups which have comprised the congregation from the early-twentieth century into present day. Among these unmarked graves are members of the Holland, James, and Smith families, as well as Earls, Taylors, Thompsons, Websters, and Wrights. There also are presumably many members of the church's founding families, such as the Coombs and Green families, buried in the cemetery in now unmarked graves or ones marked by gravestones that are now worn and illegible. For a list of known internments in the cemetery see figure 32.

## Integrity

African Union Church of Iron Hill has high levels of integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, feeling, and association. While the integrity of the original materials is not as high, the covering or replacement of building materials is an important part of the church's history and architecture because it reflects the building's longstanding centrality within the local Black community, as well as adaptive vernacular building practices of a comparatively small and rural congregation. Historically at an economic disadvantage, congregants periodically sought to beautify and update their church through the addition of popular and mass-produced architectural materials, like the early-twentieth century machine-made balustrade in the sanctuary and 1970s faux wood paneling on the walls. In other instances, the covering or replacement of deteriorating fabric with cheaper contemporary building materials, like asbestos siding and vinyl windows, was the economically viable option for the small congregation. Twentieth-century modifications to the building, the addition (and continued use) of the social hall, and the active cemetery reflect its enduring role within the community, particularly during the Jim Crow era and continued *de jure* and *de facto* segregation in Delaware in the decades after World War II.

**Location:** The church, social hall, and cemetery are in their original locations on the west side of Whittaker Road at Iron Hill. While the social hall and small parcels of land for the cemetery were added during the early-to-mid-twentieth century, these additions reflect the continued use and centrality of the church within the Black community at Iron Hill.

**Setting:** The church's setting retains a high degree of integrity. Much of the land on the west side of Whittaker Road surrounding the church consisted of open fields during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, while the east side of the road was forested. The west side of Whittaker Road became increasingly wooded during the early-to-mid-twentieth century, reaching its

heavily wooded state by the 1970s. Despite the encroaching suburbanization in the Iron Hill area, the woods surrounding the church, the proximity of Iron Hill Park, and the larger lot sizes of nearby properties has helped to preserve the church's setting and relative isolation.

**Design:** African Union Church of Iron Hill retains a relatively high degree of design integrity. Its form and overall design as a rural nineteenth-century Black church is clearly evident, and its two early-twentieth century additions occurred within the period of significance. The building's simplicity, small scale, massing, and fenestration reflect the typology of Black churches built during the nineteenth century in Delaware. Furthermore, like African Union Church of Iron Hill, several of these churches had vestibule additions in the twentieth century, indicating that congregations often modified their church buildings to meet their changing needs and reflect architectural trends. Likewise, the vernacular Gothic Revival windows reflect widespread renewed interest in Gothic-style architecture among many Methodist congregations, including modest Black churches, during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

**Materials:** The church has a moderate level of material integrity, with materials reflecting multiple eras from its period of significance (1852-1970), as well as some alterations afterwards. The changes in materials reflect the long-term use and importance of the church within the Iron Hill community. The congregation replaced some materials to update and refresh the church's appearance and also to address problems as the building aged. Materials like wood clapboard, wood-and-glass window sashes, and plaster walls became expensive to repair or replace in kind during the twentieth century. Like the c. 1968 construction of a social hall from repurposed chicken coops, the replacement of original materials with cheaper ones reflects the financial constraints faced by a small, rural, and historically economically disadvantaged community. For example, while the original structural members and cladding remain, the exterior wood weatherboard walls have been covered with asbestos shingle siding, applied during the 1960s. The congregation continued to make some updates to the church's aesthetics after the period of significance, from the 1970s onward, further replacing or covering some of the aging and deteriorated building materials. The roof has been clad in asphalt shingles. The interior plaster walls have been covered by 1970s faux wood paneling—which, though occurring after the period of significance, reflects a common alteration within legacy Spencer churches in northern Delaware around that time. The windows and front double doors are also late-twentieth century replacements. Despite these later changes, many of the interior features, like the altar and balcony columns, date to the early-twentieth century.

**Workmanship:** African Union Church of Iron Hill retains a high level of workmanship evidencing a mid-nineteenth century construction. The floor joists are logs left partially in the round, and the building was framed using sash sawn lumber, machine-cut nails, and combination framing indicative of its 1850s construction date. Interior details like the altar, balustrades, balcony columns, and beadboard finish in the balcony reflect the accessibility of mass-produced, machine-made materials of the early-twentieth century. The gravestones also showcase late-nineteenth and twentieth century production techniques in their assembly, carvings, and finishes.

**Feeling:** The church retains a high level of feeling, evoking that of a rural Black church, especially through its secluded location, modest size, vernacular appearance, and intact cemetery with marked and unmarked graves.

**Association:** African Union Church of Iron Hill retains a high level of association. While it changed denominational hands during the late-twentieth century, the church has retained its association with the local Black community since its construction by freedmen in the 1850s. Its remaining congregants take pride in the fact that it is the oldest known surviving African Union Church building constructed by a free Black community in northern Delaware.

## 8. Statement of Significance

**Applicable National Register Criteria**
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

[X] A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

[ ] B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

[X] C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

[ ] D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

[X] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes

[ ] B. Removed from its original location

[ ] C. A birthplace or grave

[X] D. A cemetery

[ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure

[ ] F. A commemorative property

[ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

**Areas of Significance**
(Enter categories from instructions.)
ARCHITECTURE
ETHNIC HERITAGE/BLACK
RELIGION
SOCIAL HISTORY

**Period of Significance**
1852-1970

**Significant Dates**
1852-1854

**Significant Person**
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

African Union Church of Iron Hill, also known historically as Union American Church of Iron Hill, St. Daniel's U.A.M.E. Church of Iron Hill, and now called St. Daniel's Community Church of Iron Hill, is locally significant under Criteria A and C. It is the oldest known surviving free Black church that was built as part of Peter Spencer's African Union Church movement in northern Delaware. As a Spencer church, it is representative of the religious practices and culture of rural Black communities in New Castle County, Delaware, from the antebellum period through desegregation in the 1970s. It also reflects the vernacular building practices of local Black congregations—particularly the construction of impermanent church buildings, Gothic Revival renovations in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, and mid-twentieth century renovations using modern vernacular materials. The period of significance spans from the church's construction by a free Black community in 1852 through 1970, by which time the church's leadership had added a vestibule, choir area, and a small social hall to meet the evolving needs of its vital congregation.

Under Criterion Consideration A, the church building and its grounds serve as non-traditional documents that help chronicle the sometimes-elusive history of the free Black community surrounding Iron Hill, from before emancipation through the mid-twentieth century. Built on land given to the church by freeman William Walker in 1852, the present church building functioned as one of the community's most important institutions through desegregation in the late 1960s and now stands as the only known extant building of the antebellum-era free Black community at Iron Hill. However, the period of significance was expanded to 1970 to include congregational decisions which expanded the building and improved physical resources vital to the church's community outreach services.

Under Criterion Consideration D, the cemetery features a variety of Black burial practices, including impermanent grave markers that have disappeared, uncarved natural stones, and simple headstones. While there are approximately two dozen marked graves in the cemetery, many more are unmarked, having originally featured more economic simple wooden crosses or field stones, which deteriorated or were moved over time. The oldest marked graves date from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, a majority of which are simple upright, cambered granite or marble markers with minimal ornamentation. A handful of the late-twentieth century stones are carved with hearts or religious iconography, such as crosses, doves, and bibles. There are also three standard military-issued gravestones belonging to congregation members Private Frederick Wright, who served in the Civil War; Private Herman Wellington Taylor, who served in World War I; and Private Willard F. Earl, who served in World War II. In addition to Earls, Taylors, and Wrights, members of the Green, James, Smith, Thompson, and Webster families are interred within the cemetery. There are presumably also many members of the families first affiliated with the church, such as the Coombs family, buried in the churchyard, in now unmarked graves or marked by stones now worn and illegible.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

## Criterion A

### Summary of Significance

African Union Church of Iron Hill is significant under Criterion A because it represents the centrality of Peter Spencer Churches as cultural institutions within Black communities in New Castle County, Delaware. As the last known surviving example in the northern Delaware of a Spencer Church constructed by a free Black community prior to the Civil War, the church played a key role in forming and sustaining the community at Iron Hill, from the antebellum period through desegregation during the late 1960s.

*Free Black Communities in Antebellum New Castle County, Delaware*

The free Black community at Iron Hill, in which the African Union Church of Iron Hill was established, was one of many similar communities that developed in antebellum Delaware. Over the course of the eighteenth century, prosperous colonists living in the vicinity of Iron Hill in Pencader Hundred purchased enslaved Africans to labor in their industries and farms.[4] Following the American Revolution, however, Delawareans increasingly manumitted enslaved people for both ideological and economic reasons. Some slaveholders found slavery incompatible with the republican ideals of the American Revolution. Others felt that they could not reconcile the system of slavery with their religious beliefs, especially as the fervor of the Second Great Awakening sparked social reform led by local anti-slavery Quakers and Methodists during the early-nineteenth century. Additionally, increasing crop diversification during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries required less labor than the tobacco cultivated more extensively during the seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, leading slaveholders to free the enslaved people whose labor they no longer needed. As reflected in census records, there were 8,887 enslaved people living in Delaware in 1790. By 1820, the number of enslaved people had dropped to 4,509, further declining to 2,605 by 1840. In 1860, on the eve of the Civil War, there were 1,789 enslaved people residing in Delaware. Meanwhile, the number of free Blacks rose. In 1790, there were 3,899 residing in Delaware. The number continued to increase, with 12,958 in 1820, 16,919 in 1840, and 19,829 in 1860.[5]

In the decades preceding the Civil War, an increasing number of free Blacks lived in Pencader Hundred. In comparison to the other hundreds in New Castle County, Pencader Hundred had a moderate amount of enslaved people reported on census records, reflecting the ideological and economic impact of its location in central New Castle County (see figure 33 for map). The hundreds north of Pencader closest to the Pennsylvania border reported few to no enslaved individuals on the 1850 U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedules. For example, there were no enslaved individuals reported in Brandywine Hundred, while there were two in Christiana

[4] Hundreds are unincorporated subdivisions of counties. In other state an equivalency to a hundred is a township.
[5] Rebecca J. Sheppard, et al. "Reconstructing Delaware's Free Black Communities, 1800-1870," University of Delaware, September 27, 2010, 13.

Hundred. Most slaveholders in the area had manumitted their enslaved people before 1850 due to the heavy abolitionist influence of Quakers and Methodists and piedmont-area farmers' conversion to less labor-intensive produce, dairy, and livestock farming around rapidly industrializing cities, like Wilmington, on the Delaware River. Slavery persisted in New Castle County's southern hundreds in the coastal plain, where farmers continued to grow grains, which was more labor intensive. In 1850, there were 51 enslaved people living in Appoquinimink Hundred and 166 enslaved people in St. George's Hundred. In the middle hundreds, like Pencader Hundred, farmers pursued a mixture of both types of agriculture, resulting in intermediate numbers of enslaved people. Despite their proximity to Maryland, where slavery continued through the Civil War, White Clay Creek and Pencader Hundreds had fewer enslaved individuals than New Castle and Red Lion Hundreds to the east, likely the result of a combination of ideology and geography. Many of the white residents of White Clay Creek and Pencader Hundreds were members of Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian churches—denominations that increasingly found slavery ideologically incompatible in the north during the early-to-mid-nineteenth century. White Clay Creek and Pencader Hundreds' geographic location within the piedmont and along the fall line also possibly influenced farmers there to grow less grain than those in New Castle and Red Lion Hundred, who were situated in the coastal plain. In 1850, there were 16 slaveholders and 33 enslaved people living in Pencader Hundred. Of these slaveholders, 10 enslaved one person and two enslaved two people. One slaveholder each enslaved three, four, and five people, with the largest slaveholder in the hundred enslaving six people. Similarly, there were 19 enslaved people in White Clay Creek Hundred. Meanwhile, there were 76 enslaved people residing in New Castle Hundred and 48 enslaved people in Red Lion Hundred.[6]

The 1850 U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedules also reflected the ongoing manumission of enslaved people in Pencader Hundred and New Castle County. The listing of manumitted people on the slave schedules usually indicated that the enslaved people would be manumitted at a certain age, after a specific period of time, or upon their enslavers' deaths. Of the 33 enslaved people reported in Pencader Hundred on the census, 13 had been manumitted and one had been listed as fugitive, bringing the total number of enslaved people whose owners had not yet formally developed plans for their manumission to 19. Likewise, the slave schedules reported that 25 enslaved people had been manumitted in New Castle Hundred with an additional 15 who had self-liberated. Manumissions were also high in the southernmost hundreds, with 20 manumissions and two fugitives in Appoquinimink Hundred and 72 manumissions and two fugitives in St. George's Hundred. By 1860, the number of enslaved people in Pencader Hundred had dropped to eleven. Two slaveholders enslaved one person and three slaveholders each enslaved two people. Jonathan Evans was the largest slaveholder in the hundred with three enslaved people. Most of the slaveholders lived in the southern part of Pencader Hundred, far from the Iron Hill area, although Evans himself was an exception. Despite the manumissions listed on the 1850 census, the number of enslaved people in the hundreds to the north of Pencader Hundred remained constant between 1850 and 1860. There were four enslaved people

[6] Sheppard, et al., "Delaware's Free Black Communities," 13-14; 1850 U.S. Federal Census -Slave Schedules, New Castle County, Delaware, [database on-line]. Ancestry.com. Provo, UT, USA.

in Mill Creek Hundred and 16 enslaved people in White Clay Creek Hundred. Elsewhere, the number of enslaved people in New Castle County dropped. By 1860, there were five enslaved people reported in Wilmington, 17 in New Castle Hundred, and 10 in Red Lion Hundred. The number of enslaved people in St. George's Hundred declined to 108 people. The enslaved population actually increased in Appoquinimink Hundred to 89 enslaved people.[7]

With increasing numbers of free Blacks living in Delaware after 1800, multiple factors motivated individuals to remain in the state, forming communities and networks that provided social and economic support. Many free people stayed to be close to family members who remained enslaved. Others negotiated agricultural lease-labor agreements with farmers or found other attractive job opportunities in rapidly industrializing cities and towns. Additionally, beginning in the early-nineteenth century, new laws aimed to control Black mobility by preventing free Blacks from migrating into Delaware and banning them from reentering the state if they had left for more than six months. These laws motivated free Blacks to remain in state due to their familial ties but also gave them more leverage in negotiating labor contracts in an economy where white farmers had limits on their access to laborers. Free Blacks formed communities in both rural and urban areas because they felt like they had security in numbers, especially if they also had cultivated relationships with local white employers. As residents of a border state, many free Blacks lived in constant fear of being captured and sold south. Although free, they remained politically, socially, and legally disenfranchised. The formation of free Black communities fostered networks of social support.[8]

Depicted in the 1868 Pomeroy and Beers Atlas of the State of Delaware, the locations of Black churches provide a sense of the development of free Black communities in New Castle County. Four churches developed in and around the City of Wilmington, one in the City of New Castle, one in Odessa, and one in Polktown, a Black enclave outside of Delaware City. The prevalence of Black churches in and near cities reflected the ways in which many free Blacks congregated in urban clusters or formed shadow towns outside of cities where they could pool resources and pursue a greater variety of job opportunities in antebellum Delaware. Many free people also formed rural communities where they forged relationships with white farmers and industrialists like millers and brick manufacturers who employed them, particularly in the more agricultural hundreds like Pencader Hundred. Larger, rural free Black communities formed churches, such as the free Black community located to the north of Newport in Christiana Hundred, one in New Castle Hundred located south of Christiana, and the community to the west of Port Penn in St. George's Hundred. Indicative of the high number of free people and the area's highly agrarian nature, there were two rural Black churches in Pencader Hundred—African Union Church of Iron Hill and St. Thomas in Glasgow. Those living in smaller free Black communities, such as in or near Newark, frequently attended the churches of larger nearby communities like Iron Hill until they were able to form their own.[9]

[7] 1850 Slave Schedules; 1860 U.S. Federal Census -Slave Schedules, New Castle County, Delaware, [database on-line]. Ancestry.com. Provo, UT, USA.
[8] Sheppard, et al., "Delaware's Free Black Communities," 14-15.
[9] Delaware 1868 Hundreds Maps, University of Delaware, https://www.dgs.udel.edu/delaware-1868-hundreds-maps.

*Pencader Hundred*

In 1701, to strengthen his claims to the land, William Penn granted 30,000 acres known as the Welsh Tract in what is now Pencader Hundred, Delaware, and Cecil County, Maryland, to a small group of Baptist and Presbyterian Welsh settlers fleeing religious persecution. As skilled miners, the Welsh settlers were attracted by the possibility of extracting iron from Iron Hill, the north side of which was within the Welsh Tract. Beginning in 1703, the Welsh settlers started mining Iron Hill through open pit mines and shallow shafts. Descendant of settlers Samuel James constructed a forge to smelt the iron near the base of Iron Hill on the Christiana Creek in 1723.[10] Two years later, he persuaded a group of Pennsylvania ironmasters to form a company that purchased 1,000 acres on Iron Hill and constructed the Abbington Iron Works on the south bank of the Christiana River near the Welsh Tract Old School Baptist Church (NR# 73000527). The iron works only operated for about ten years before it failed in 1734. Abraham Taylor and John White bought James's land and shares in the company and may have continued the mining and smelting operations until they sold the property to miller Andrew Fisher in 1768.[11] Agriculture and the establishment of mills on the Christiana River proved to be more profitable for the residents of the Iron Hill area, which likely played a greater factor in the rise of slavery than mining. No more serious attempts to mine Iron Hill were made until October 1841, when Philadelphia ironmaster David C. Wood acquired 172 acres there. Wood only mined for a few years prior to his death in 1848. His brother Richard Wood sold both of Wood's parcels to industrialists Joseph and George P. Whitaker in November 1850. In 1836, the Whitaker brothers, William Chandler, and prominent Wilmington abolitionist Thomas Garrett bought the site of the eighteenth-century Principio Iron Works (NR# 72000575) near Perryville, Maryland, and constructed a new blast furnace in 1837. The Whitakers bought the mines at Iron Hill because they could conveniently ship ore from Iron Hill to Principio Furnace on the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad, which ran through Newark.[12] They predominantly employed Irish immigrants at Iron Hill. Since free Blacks who acquired land on Iron Hill bought the property before Wood reopened the mines and were listed as farm laborers on the 1850 federal census, agriculture in the area around Iron Hill appears to have driven the formation of the community. While the iron mines were pivotal to the development of the Iron Hill area, they do not appear to have been key to the formation of the local free Black community.[13]

*Iron Hill's Free Black Community*

The free Black community at Iron Hill began to develop in the mid-1830s, as those recently

[10] Austin N. Hungerford, "The Old Abbington Iron Works in New Castle County, Delaware," *The Bulletin of the American Iron and Steel Association* 21, no. 21 (June 22, 1887), accessed February 12, 2020, Google Books, https://books.google.com/books?id=2LY2AQAAMAAJ&lpg=PA161&ots=nNxY-Y_S5b&dq=david%20c%20wood%20iron%20hill&pg=PA161#v=onepage&q=david%20c%20wood%20iron%20hill&f=false.

[11] Joan M. Norton, "National Register of Historic Places Registration: Andrew Fisher House," National Park Service, October 1972, accessed February 12, 2020, https://npgallery.nps.gov/GetAsset/16309001-2307-4ed7-ac76-d1ed73d591e8.

[12] "National Register of Historic Places Registration: Principio Furnace," National Park Service, July 1969, accessed February 25, 2020, https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/NR_PDFs/NR-74.pdf.

[13] Mrs. Preston Parish, Owen and Owen, *A History of the Iron Hill Area*, 4-5.

manumitted began to acquire house and garden properties. Common throughout Delaware, house and garden properties usually consisted of one- to five-acre lots rented or sold by white farmers to formerly enslaved people—frequently individuals who they had just manumitted—to ensure that they continued to have a cheap source of labor. Organized linearly along roads in rural areas, house and garden properties usually contained a former slave cabin or a newly constructed one-and-a-half or two-story house, often with one room on the ground floor and a room above for sleeping. Frequently located on a farmer's least desirable agricultural land, the house and garden properties were large enough for a family to grow produce and raise a few animals to sustain themselves but not so large that they could gain complete financial independence through farming. As a result, free Blacks had to work on the nearby farms during peak times in crop production, even if they owned the property and had not signed a rental agreement requiring their labor. In the early Iron Hill community, free Blacks initially purchased house and garden properties instead of renting them.[14]

The earliest free Black residents of Iron Hill bought house and garden properties from white farmers Edward Hamman and John Wright. Both men were farmers in White Clay Creek Hundred who also owned 92.25 and 65 acres, respectively, on Iron Hill in Pencader Hundred. Hamman and Wright may have jointly agreed to sell small house and garden lots in the adjacent corners of their properties on the lower, western slope of Iron Hill because it was rocky and not particularly fertile, yet would guarantee them a source of farm labor. In April 1834, Benjamin Smith bought 14 acres from Hamman for $113, a slightly larger acreage than was normal for the typical house and garden. Shortly thereafter, in July 1835, Zebulon James purchased a three-acre house and garden property from Wright for $110. The property contained a log house located on what is now the east side of Whittaker Road. In October 1835, James Gustus also acquired a three-acre house and garden lot from Wright. Gustus's lot was located directly to the north of James's property and to the south of Smith's property, indicating that the earliest part of the Iron Hill community developed linearly along the east side of Whittaker Road. By the 1840 United States Census, the families of Oliver Gustus, James Gustus, James Wallace, Benjamin Smith, and Zebulon James had formed a community at Iron Hill. All of the families were employed in agriculture.[15]

The portion of the community along the west side of Whittaker Road did not develop until April 1841 when Solomon Grier, William Walker, and Daniel Parker pooled their resources to purchase 39.5 acres from William Kincaid for $650. Grier, Walker, and Parker subdivided their property into 13-acre lots fronting Whittaker Road in March 1849, although the subdivision did

[14] Rebecca J. Sheppard, Anna Andrzejewski, and Deidra C. McCarthy, "The House and Garden in Central Delaware, 1780-1930+/-," Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, 1992, 2-9, http://udspace.udel.edu/handle/19716/4900; New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Book H5, Pages 285-288, Ancestry.com, Delaware, Land Records, 1677-1947 [database on-line], Provo, UT, USA; New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Book F6, Pages 118-120, Ancestry.com, Delaware, Land Records, 1677-1947 [database on-line], Provo, UT, USA.

[15] New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Book N4, Pages 330-332, Book Q4, Pages 425-427, Book O4, Pages 261-263, Book U4, Pages 236-237, Book W4, Page 467, Ancestry.com, Delaware, Land Records, 1677-1947 [database on-line], Provo, UT, USA; 1840 United States Federal Census, White Clay Creek, New Castle, Delaware, Roll *58*, Page *288*, Family History Library Film 0006434.

not formally take place until January 1854 when Grier sold his property and left the area. Walker took the southern third, Grier the middle third, and Parker the northern third. Despite the large Black community that had formed by the late 1840s, none of the property owners were recorded on the 1849 Rea and Price Map of New Castle County, Delaware.[16]

The Iron Hill community continued to develop westward through the Muddy Run stream valley located between Iron Hill and Sandy Brae Hill during the 1840s and 1850s. In May 1844, Levi Green acquired a small 25-acre farm from the widow of a white farmer named Hannah Harding. Although the farm was located on the west side of Otts Chapel Road near the base of Sandy Brae Hill, the Green family was likely a part of the social network centered around the Iron Hill community. He bought an additional 15 acres in 1865, expanding his landholdings eastward towards Iron Hill. Similarly, in March 1858, Joseph James and Benjamin Greer purchased 33 acres, located between the present-day Ironside Road and the Green family property near Sandy Brae Hill, from Sarah Livingston, another widow of a white farmer. Joseph James may have been Zebulon James's younger brother, while Benjamin Greer (alternately spelled Grier and Grear) was likely Solomon Grier's son. They subdivided the property the following year, with Joseph James taking the western 16 acres and Benjamin Greer the 16 eastern acres. Greer also sold five acres on the north side of his property along Ironside Road to Dolphin Lewis in August 1859. Elizabeth Lum may have also acquired a house on the east side of Otts Chapel Road near Joseph James's house based on the 1868 Pomeroy and Beers Atlas of the State of Delaware for Pencader Hundred. Originally married to Thomas Lum, who in 1838 acquired a 75-acre farm south of the Old Baltimore Pike—across from Levi Green's farm—and west of Pleasant Valley Road, Elizabeth Lum may have moved to a house on Otts Chapel Road after her husband died and their children took over the management of the family farm, around 1857. Lum, Joseph James, Samuel James, and Lewis appear to have had houses constructed along present-day Smith Way by 1868, with Lum's house near the intersection with Otts Chapel Road and Lewis's house near the intersection with Ironside Road.[17]

Other free Blacks moved to the Iron Hill community during the 1840s and 1850s. In April 1849, James Coombs (alternately spelled Cooms, Combs, McComb, and McCombs) bought James Gustus's property after Gustus had moved to Chester County, Pennsylvania. Similarly, in 1856, Clayton Earle acquired a three-acre house and garden property on the east side of the jog in Whittaker Road, between Walker's property on the west and Coombs and James's properties further to the east. By the 1860 census, several families owned their own farms, including the Shafers, Lums, and Greens, while members of the Parker, Coombs, Joseph James, Greer, and Earle families were farm laborers. Walker and Lewis were day laborers, which suggests that they

[16] Parker and Greer's lots now fall within the Iron Hill Park, while Walker's property has been developed into three suburban lots. New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Book H5, Pages 236-238, Book B6, Pages 418-423, Book N6, Pages 497-499, Ancestry.com, Delaware, Land Records, 1677-1947 [database on-line], Provo, UT, USA; Samuel M. Rea and Jacob Price, *Map of New Castle County, Delaware from original surveys* (Philadelphia: Smith and Wistar, 1849), Map https://lccn.loc.gov/2013593084; 1850 United States Federal Census, Pencader Hundred, New Castle, Delaware, Roll M432_54, Family History Library Film.

[17] New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Book N5, Pages 163-165, Book M8, Pages 352-354, Book B7, Pages 349-351, Book G7, Pages 517-519, Book G7, Pages 519-521, Book H7, Pages 131-132, Book A5, Pages 397-399, Book A7, Pages 2-4, Ancestry.com, Delaware, Land Records, 1677-1947 [database on-line], Provo, UT, USA;

may have also been employed in nearby mines or mills. Zebulon James was a teamster, while his eldest sons were also farm laborers.[18]

While most of the free Black residents in the Iron Hill community owned their own house and garden properties, rental properties also became increasingly common as local white farmer Patrick Sullivan began to acquire tenant houses during the 1850s. First, he purchased Solomon Grier's house on the west side of Whittaker Road. In January 1854, Grier sold his property to Richard Cann, who in turn sold it to Sullivan two days later. He also bought an acre of Clayton Earle's house and garden property containing a small frame house at a sheriff's sale in 1862 after the sheriff seized Earle's property because he owed $143 to another local white farmer, Alexander Simpson. By the time of the 1868 Pomeroy and Beers Atlas of the State of Delaware for Pencader Hundred, Sullivan apparently owned two tenant houses on the east side of Whittaker Road, on Earle's former property, as well as a house on Grier's former property.[19]

*Development of the African Union Church in Northern Delaware (1805-1843)*

In the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, an independent Black church movement swept through the northern states, in many ways paralleling the religious and philosophical ideologies that led to the decline of slavery in the north. In Wilmington, Delaware, Peter Spencer led the movement to create the first independent Black denomination in the country. Formerly enslaved, Spencer was inspired by the constitutional right of religious freedom and Black self-determination. In 1805, he led Black congregants in breaking away from the racially segregated Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church and founded the Ezion Methodist Episcopal Church in Wilmington. Although Ezion largely controlled its own affairs, it remained in the white Methodist Episcopal Conference and retained ties with Asbury. When it became clear in 1812 that the congregants of Ezion would not be allowed to select their own minister or trustees, Spencer and William Anderson left Ezion to found the Union Church of African Members in 1813. The Union Church of Africans was the first fully independent Black denomination in the United States, preceding Richard Allen's African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Philadelphia by three years. Spencer's congregation initially worshipped in a chicken coop on Tatnall Street in Wilmington prior to constructing a church building at 819 French Street. Beginning in 1813, Spencer also started holding the annual August Quarterly as an interdenominational expression of Black faith, culture, and political protest. These festivals attracted thousands of people across the region and helped promote African Unionism.[20]

The ideology of the African Union Church quickly gained traction. New congregations rapidly formed in northern Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. In New Castle County,

[18] New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Book Z5, Pages 498-499, Book Y6, Pages 84-85, Ancestry.com, Delaware, Land Records, 1677-1947 [database on-line], Provo, UT, USA; 1850 United States Federal Census; 1860 United States Federal Census, Pencader Hundred, New Castle, Delaware, Roll M653_97, Page *598*, Family History Library Film 803097.

[19] New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Book N6, Pages 392-394, Book N6, Pages 497-499, Book O7, Pages 318-320, Ancestry.com, Delaware, Land Records, 1677-1947 [database on-line], Provo, UT, USA; "Pencader Hundred," Delaware 1868 Hundreds Maps, accessed May 4, 2020, http://data.dgs.udel.edu/sites/1868hundreds/pdf/penca.pdf.

[20] Constance J. Cooper and Lewis V. Baldwin, *Forging Faith, Building Freedom: African American Faith Experiences in Delaware, 1800-1980* (Dover, DE: Delaware Heritage Press, 2015), 35-39, 43.

the African Union Church became the predominant Christian denomination for rural Blacks prior to the Civil War. In Pencader Hundred, many free and enslaved Blacks had worshipped in congregations established by whites during the eighteenth century. For example, records from the earliest church in the area, the Welsh Tract Old School Baptist Church (NR# 73000527, founded in 1701—current building constructed in 1746), built to the north of Iron Hill, indicated that people of color joined the congregation and attended worship services. The Pencader Presbyterian Church founded in 1710 in Glasgow was probably similar. As the free Black population increased during the early-to-mid-nineteenth century, many likely discovered African Unionism through local networks in Wilmington and through the August Quarterly, finding Spencer's concept of an independent church and Black self-determination attractive.[21]

According to oral histories, a community of free people quickly adopted African Unionism in Pencader Hundred shortly after Spencer established the denomination. The Mt. Pisgah UAME Church in Middletown, Delaware, allegedly originated in the Welsh Tract area near Iron Hill in 1813 but moved to the vicinity of Summit Bridge when congregation members relocated to work on the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal during the 1820s. In 1837, the New York-based *Colored American* published an article on the African Union Church in Delaware, stating that congregations were located in Wilmington, New Castle, Christiana, Delaware City, and Welsh Tract. Mt. Pisgah Church may have been the Delaware City congregation, while St. Thomas Church, founded in 1827 several miles south of Iron Hill, in Glasgow, could have been the Welsh Tract congregation. The other northern Delaware congregations mentioned in the article were the Mother Church in Wilmington, the c. 1818 Bethany congregation in New Castle (see figure 22), and the c. 1819 Old Fort Church (built 1897, NR# 83001402) congregation in Christiana. The Wilmington church had the largest congregation with 175 members and approximately 400 non-member attendees, while the New Castle church reportedly had 65 members and about 250 non-members. Similarly, the Delaware City church had 60 members and about 225 non-members. The more rural congregations had slightly lower membership with 55 members at Christiana and 50 members at Welsh Tract. Importantly, both congregations had approximately 250 non-members, likely helping to spread the growth of the African Union Church as these "hearers" took Spencer's message with them back to their own communities and founded their own local churches, like the one at Iron Hill. By the time of Peter Spencer's death in 1843, he had helped found approximately 30 churches—each with an affiliated school for educating Black children—in northern Delaware and neighboring free states.[22]

[21] Records of the Welsh Tract Baptist Meeting, Pencader Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware 1701 to 1828 (Wilmington: Historical Society of Delaware, 1904), Digitized by Princeton Theological Seminary Library, https://archive.org/details/recordsofwelshtr00wels/page/n8/mode/2up and "History of Pencader Presbyterian Church Historical address delivered on the occasion of the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Woman's Missionary Society (Glasgow, DE: Pencader Presbyterian Church Women's Missionary Society, 1899), digitized by Forgotten Books.

[22] "Diverse Faith Communities," Delaware Historical Society, accessed February 25, 2020, https://dehistory.org/diverse-faith-communities; "Sketch of Churches and Ecclesiastical Organizations among the People of Color," *Colored American,* October 21, 1837.

*The African Union Church of Iron Hill (1838-1890)*

Although its origins are obscure due to a lack of written documentation, the African Union Church of Iron Hill likely formed shortly after the community was established. The date stone on the church building seems to indicate that the congregation formed in 1838, four years after free Blacks began to acquire property at Iron Hill. Since the congregation formed prior to Spencer's death, it is possible that he helped found it. The congregation likely worshipped at a member's house until William Walker and his wife, Hester, deeded a quarter of an acre to the trustees of the African Union Church on September 9, 1852, for five dollars. The trustees included Iron Hill residents Walker, Daniel Parker, and James Coombs, as well as James Potter, George Morris, Henry Evans, and Isaac Bacchus of White Clay Creek Hundred, indicating that the congregation initially included members from the northern part of Pencader Hundred in the vicinity of Iron Hill and members from White Clay Creek Hundred to the north and east of Iron Hill. The African Union Church of Iron Hill congregation likely constructed the church building shortly after acquiring the land from the Walkers, as the "Meeting House road" and Walker's property line were listed as boundaries of the house and garden purchased by Clayton Earle in October 1856. "Meeting House road" likely referred to the present-day Whittaker Road, as it would have been the connecting route from Old Baltimore Pike to the south over Iron Hill to Welsh Tract Road to the north and the Welsh Tract Old School Baptist Church. Further, the African Union Church lot was originally "landlocked" within Walker's property, hence the references to the road and Walker's land as property boundaries instead of the church property itself. The church lot originally measured approximately 82 feet on its eastern and western boundaries and 135 feet on its northern and southern boundaries prior to the expansion to its current size during in the twentieth century. The church was roughly centered along the lot's eastern boundary, with most of the parcel located west of the building. Consistent with African Unionism's emphasis on education, the community also established a school for Black children. Although the location of where the community held classes during the mid-nineteenth century is unknown, one of the early schoolteachers, Susan Blackston, resided with her family in Walker's household or on his property as of the 1850 census.[23]

In 1868, the African Union Church of Iron Hill reincorporated as a Union American Methodist Episcopal (U.A.M.E.) Church after a series of schisms occurred in the Union Church of Africans following a leadership vacuum created by Peter Spencer's death. A legal battle during the 1850s resulted in thirty congregations abandoning the Union Church of Africans in 1855, leaving only the Mother Church in Wilmington. The Union Church of Africans merged with the First Colored Methodist Protestant Church in 1866 to form the African Union First Colored Methodist Protestant (A.U.M.P.) Church (see figure 20). Several formerly African Union congregations rejoined the A.U.M.P. Church, including the two churches closest to Iron Hill—St. Thomas in Glasgow and St. John's in Newark. The other former African Union Church congregations in New Castle County, including the congregation at Iron Hill, joined the Union American Church of Wilmington, which formed during the 1855 schism. Despite the schism, the church remained fundamentally Spencerian Methodist in religion and structure, except members voted to change

[23] New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Book N6, Pages 506-507, Book Y6, Pages 84-85, Ancestry.com, Delaware, Land Records, 1677-1947 [database on-line], Provo, UT, USA; 1850 United States Federal Census.

the name of church leaders from presidents to bishops. The Union American Church of Wilmington reincorporated as the Union American Methodist Episcopal (UAME) Church in 1867 (see figure 21). The congregation at Iron Hill followed suit, meeting on September 20, 1867, to formally decide to incorporate as the Union American Church of Iron Hill. They did not legally incorporate until the following year. Several of the original church trustees from Iron Hill remained, including Parker, Coombs, and Potter, who had moved to Pencader Hundred. Walker's son William H. Walker, Jr., had replaced his father as a trustee. The congregation also elected Isaac Daniels of White Clay Creek Hundred as a trustee, indicating that some Black residents in White Clay Creek still attended church at Iron Hill despite the formation of St. John's A.U.M.P. Church in Newark around 1848. The Iron Hill congregation became the only U.A.M.E. church in the western part of New Castle County. Continuing schisms and dissention in the Spencer Churches prevented the denominations from growing beyond regional churches, but they played a central role in New Castle County's Black communities.[24]

During the 1870s and 1880s, the Black community at Iron Hill experienced a demographic shift. Many residents of the area died or moved to cities. For example, by the 1880 census, both Walker and Parker had died. Walker's sons William H. and Isaac Walker had moved to Wilmington to pursue better job opportunities in the industrialized city. Similarly, Potter moved to Newark, and Daniels left the area or died by 1880. The only remaining trustee from the 1868 incorporation was James Coombs. He continued to work as a farm laborer, although the 1880 census showed that his two sons James and Isaac worked in the iron mines along with other members of the community like Levi Taylor and cousins David James, Sr., and David James, Jr. In the 1870 census, all of the male members of the James family worked in agriculture except for seaman Samuel James, suggesting that mine owners only briefly employed Black workers in addition to the Irish immigrants who they ordinarily hired from the 1870s through 1884 when the mines closed. The majority of the Black population living in the vicinity of Iron Hill remained employed in agriculture, like Levi Green's family and Civil War veteran Frederick Wright. Many of the older congregation members who died during the late-nineteenth century were likely buried in now unmarked graves to the north and west of the church building. The oldest surviving gravestone with the earliest legible death date is for Elizabeth Sanders, who died in 1865. The few other early surviving stones dating to around the turn of the century include Wright's military-issued gravestone, Stephen Rider's 1899 gravestone, and the shared headstone of Samuel James, who died in 1881, and his wife, Cecelia, who died in 1900.[25]

*Iron Hill Church in the Twentieth Century*

After the church leaders of the mid-nineteenth century died and their families largely left Iron Hill, the remaining members of the Coombs, Green, James, and Taylor families continued to

[24] Cooper and Baldwin, *Forging Faith, Building Freedom*, 38-41; Dorothy E. Wilmore, *Peter Spencer's Movement: Exploring the History of the Union American Methodist Episcopal Church* (Wilmington, DE: Village Printing, 2001), 51-56; New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Book W8, Pages 134-135, Ancestry.com, Delaware, Land Records, 1677-1947 [database on-line], Provo, UT, USA.

[25] 1870 United States Federal Census, Pencader Hundred, New Castle, Delaware, Roll M593_120, Page 678A, Family History Library Film 545619; 1880 United States Federal Census, Pencader Hundred, New Castle, Delaware, Roll 120, Page 276C, Family History Library Film 803097.

attend the church. With the passage of time, members of these families also died, moved to Wilmington to pursue better job opportunities, or intermarried and relocated until these families dwindled by the early-to-mid-twentieth century, resulting in a generational discontinuity in church membership. Census records indicate that employment opportunities with the nearby Pennsylvania Railroad attracted an influx of Black families to the Iron Hill community during the 1920s and 1930s, like the families of Maynard and Mary A. (Webster) Earl, Thomas Earl, David and Helen (Roy) Smith, Allen Oliver and Estella B. (Hopkins) Smith, and Edward and Daisy (Smith) Webster. Many of the present congregation members were born into these families during the late 1930s and 1940s.[26] It is these families which comprised the congregation throughout the rest of the twentieth century and have been ongoing stewards to the present day.

By the early-to-mid-twentieth century, the congregation began to run out of space for the cemetery on the church's quarter-acre lot, prompting the acquisition of two additional small parcels. In 1922, Levi Green's grandson Edward Green and his wife, Mary, gave the church an additional quarter-acre strip of land to the northeast, stretching from Whittaker Road back to partway along the north boundary of the church's original property. The parcel measured about 36 feet on its eastern and western boundaries and 296 feet on its northern and southern boundaries. Aside from the Green family plot, the church did not inter members on the land until the 1960s. Levi Taylor's son John W. Taylor also gave additional land to the church in 1940, filling in the area between the original church property, the Green's parcel, and Whittaker Road. In 1920, John Taylor had acquired William Walker's property from the wives of his deceased sons William H. and Isaac Walker, who had kept some of their father's land at Iron Hill after moving to Wilmington. Taylor may have been motivated to give the land to the church to provide space for a parking lot and ensure the future maintenance of the graves of his family members and ancestors at the northwest corner of the parcel, indicating that he was likely related to the Walker family. The stipulation in the deed stating that the graves of Taylor's relatives be undisturbed suggested that the Walkers buried some of their family members on their property adjacent to the church graveyard, likely in unmarked graves to the south or southeast of the large cedar tree in the churchyard.[27]

The congregation also updated the church's architecture during the early-twentieth century in a vernacular take on the Gothic Revival, such as in the addition of the triangular fixed window

[26] 1900 United States Federal Census, Pencader Hundred, New Castle, Delaware, Enumeration District 0059, Page 15, Family History Library Film 1240156; 1910 United States Federal Census, Pencader Hundred, New Castle, Delaware, Enumeration District 0089, Roll T624_146, Page 7B, Family History Library Film 1374159; 1920 United States Federal Census, Pencader Hundred, New Castle, Delaware, Enumeration District 163, Roll T625_204, Page 8A; 1930 United States Federal Census, Pencader Hundred, New Castle, Delaware, Enumeration District 0110, Page: 19A, Family History Library Film 2340022; William Earl, Charles Webster, Stanley Earl, Allen Smith, Jr., Jerry Earl, Alice Presberry, and Betty Webster, interview by Mary Fesak and Catherine Morrissey, St. Daniel's Community Church of Iron Hill, Newark, Delaware, February 22, 2020.

[27] New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Book N31, Pages 201-203, Ancestry.com, Delaware, Land Records, 1677-1947 [database on-line], Provo, UT, USA; New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Book Y29, Pages 275-277, Ancestry.com, Delaware, Land Records, 1677-1947 [database on-line], Provo, UT, USA; New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Book X41, Pages 346-347, Ancestry.com, Delaware, Land Records, 1677-1947 [database on-line], Provo, UT, USA.

sashes above the windows, likely replicating other churches in the area like the 1897 Old Fort Church (NR# 83001402) in Christiana (see figure 29). The congregation may have replaced the columns supporting the balcony during the same construction campaign. In the early twentieth century, tapered columns like those found in the church were frequently used locally in the construction of bungalows and Craftsman-style houses. The congregation also probably installed the present altar and altar railing. The use of grained oak and white marble for the altar and the machine-made balustrade railing are consistent with early-twentieth century production techniques, materials, and forms.[28]

*The 1960s: Growth and Fellowship in a Tumultuous Era*

During the 1960s, the growing congregation made additional modifications to the church and grounds to meet its changing needs as the building passed 100 years of age. In the mid-to-late 1960s, congregation members constructed the vestibule at the front of the church and the rear choir box addition. Congregants David Webster and Jimmy Thompson added the choir box behind the altar and pulpit to accommodate the new church choir that formed during this period. Shortly thereafter, the congregation built the vestibule as a single room that functioned as both an antechamber for the sanctuary and a storage area for choir robes. On typical Sundays, children met for Sunday school in the sanctuary at 10:00 a.m. Congregant Mary Alverta Earl was a Sunday school teacher. Worship for adults began at 11:00 a.m., usually lasting for an hour except for special services that generally ran longer. The 15 to 20 children of the congregation played outside in the churchyard during worship services, sometimes rolling down the cemetery hill in their Sunday clothes. The children performed in Christmas plays staged in the choir box and around the altar.

In the mid-1960s, the congregation also acquired two shed-roofed chicken houses discarded by the Salminen family's Iron Hill poultry farm. Congregation members moved the structures to the church property and arranged them back-to-back to construct the small, gable-roofed social hall near the property's front entrance. The addition of this social hall enabled a critical social dynamic at the church property, a fellowship that continues today, albeit with a smaller congregation. The congregants and their families held Sunday breakfasts in the social hall and hosted socials that served sandwiches, sodas, and ice cream on Friday and Saturday evenings to raise money for the church. In addition to fundraising, the social hall and dinners provided the local Black community with their own space to socialize during continued segregation during the late 1960s and 1970s, reflecting the church's ongoing importance for Black autonomy in a society where they continued to experience disenfranchisement.[29]

[28] Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Knopf, 2011), 262-287, 308-317, 452-463.

[29] Earl, et. al, interview by Fesak and Morrissey; Donna Johnson interview by Morrissey; "John J. Salminen," *The Morning News*, April 1, 1950; "Olli Salminen," *The News Journal*, October 29, 2015.

**Criterion C**

**Summary of Significance**

African Union Church of Iron Hill is significant under Criterion C because it is the only known surviving example of a first-period Spencerian Church built by free Blacks in antebellum Delaware. The building reflects the small size, impermanence, and plainness of rural Spencer Churches and, more generally, is representative of spaces in which New Castle County's Black population worshipped during much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Modifications to the building reflect the popularity of early-twentieth century vernacular Gothic Revival renovations, as well as updates with affordable, mass-produced building materials newly available in the mid-twentieth century.

*The Impermanent & Evolutionary Architecture of Early Spencer Churches*

Early African Union Churches constructed in New Castle County were often relatively impermanent frame or log structures due to their congregations' financial limitations. Congregations eventually replaced their first churches with permanent brick or stucco buildings when they could afford to do so. They also sometimes heavily modified church buildings to accommodate growing membership, new programs, and to refresh their appearances. Both urban and rural churches followed these trends, affecting their survival and integrity to different degrees—although urban renewal proved particularly devastating for the Wilmington churches. For example, the Mother Church in Wilmington initially worshipped in a chicken coop, moved from elsewhere to Tatnall Street in 1813, until congregants were able to construct a church building at 819 French Street. The congregation rebuilt the church in brick in 1827, enlarging it in 1842 to accommodate growing membership. After the 1851 schism, the building served as the Mother AUMP Church until it was demolished during urban renewal in the late 1960s. Similarly, members of the Union American Church of Wilmington initially worshipped at a congregant's home until they could afford to construct the Mother U.A.M.E. Church at 1206 French Street in 1856. They replaced the first building with a brick church in 1883. This building was also demolished during urban renewal in the late 1980s. The Bethany U.A.M.E. Church in New Castle followed similar patterns, although it was not demolished during urban renewal. The congregation formed in 1818, likely constructing a frame church in the City of New Castle. They replaced it with the current building in 1868, likely stuccoing the church in 1927 and enlarging it with a rear addition in 1949. Likewise, the Mt. Salem U.A.M.E. Church formed in Delaware City in 1835, constructing a frame church near Polktown, which was later demolished. The congregation built the current brick church closer to downtown Delaware City in 1931, later adding a front vestibule.[30]

Rural and small-town African Union Churches also followed the same patterns of replacement and heavy alteration, reflecting the limited financial resources of their congregations. No physical traces of the earliest Welsh Tract African Union Church (reportedly formed in 1813) survive, indicating that the church was impermanently built or that congregants met in a

[30] Cooper and Baldwin, *Forging Faith, Building Freedom*, 38-41; "Diverse Faith Communities," Delaware Historical Society, accessed February 25, 2020, https://dehistory.org/diverse-faith-communities; Bethany UAME Church Date Stones; New Castle, Delaware Historic Aerials, 1940-1963.

member's home. Reflecting patterns of replacement, the Mt. Pisgah U.A.M.E. Church in Middletown, which was descended from the Welsh Tract Church, built a new church on the north side of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal in 1870 and then renovated it in 1914. During the widening of the canal in the late 1930s, the Mt. Pisgah congregation had to construct a new church on the south side of the canal and move their cemetery. The building was frame with a later brick veneer added to cover most of the building. Similarly, the congregation of the Old Fort U.A.M.E. Church in Christiana constructed a frame church shortly after forming in 1819 but replaced it with a brick building in 1850. In 1897, the congregation completely dismantled the church and moved it to Christiana Bridge to be closer to the center of the Black community. They rebuilt the church with architectural details popular around the turn of the twentieth century, such as shingle siding beneath the gables and triangular transoms above the windows. Likewise, members of the St. Thomas A.U.M.P. Church in Glasgow built a log church after forming in 1827. Unlike most congregations, which appear to have demolished the original church building and constructed a more permanent building on the site of their first church, the St. Thomas congregation built a new church on their property in 1877 and used the old log church as a social hall. They substantially remodeled the 1877 church in 1968 and constructed a new social hall across the road. The log church was demolished in 2012 after a vehicular collision. The St. John's A.U.M.P. Church in Newark also constructed a log church after the congregation formed around 1848. The congregation replaced the log building with the present church in 1867, heavily remodeling it in the 1960s to reflect a mid-century ecclesiastical appearance.[31]

African Union Church of Iron Hill is an unusual surviving example of a first-period Spencer Church building in northern Delaware. Unlike the other Spencer congregations in New Castle County that replaced their original frame or log buildings, the congregation at Iron Hill never replaced their modest frame building—either because they did not see the need, or they did not have the funds to replace it with a more substantial brick building. Unlike Old Fort Church, which was moved to remain close to a shifting Black population, African Union Church of Iron Hill remained in its original location due to the periodic influx of new Black families to the area. As a result, it is the oldest known surviving example of an antebellum Spencer Church in Delaware.

[31] "Diverse Faith Communities," Delaware Historical Society, accessed February 25, 2020, https://dehistory.org/diverse-faith-communities; "Our History," Mt. Pisgah UAME Church Middletown, July 30, 2018, accessed March 11, 2020, https://www.facebook.com/pg/MtPisgahUAMEChurchMiddletown/about/?ref=page_internal; "National Register of Historic Places Registration: Old Fort Church," National Park Service, 1983, accessed March 11, 2020, https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NRHP/83001402_text; "St. John's Church, Conclusion," University of Delaware Department of Art Conservation, accessed March 11, 2020, https://www.artcons.udel.edu/outreach/diversity-initiatives/new-london-road/st-john-church; Mt. Salem UAME Church Date Stone; David Orr, "An African American Union Soldier Remembered: James Ebert and the African Union Church Cemetery in Polktown, Delaware," in *Archaeologies of African American Life in the Upper Mid-Atlantic*, ed. Michael J. Gall and Richard F. Veit (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2017), 171-177; New Castle County Historic Aerials.

*Spencer Church Architecture: Form, Fenestration, and Adornment*

Like many Black churches in Delaware, nineteenth and early-twentieth century Spencer Churches are characterized by their small size and architectural simplicity. The church buildings for Bethany U.A.M.E. (c. 1868, see figure 22), Old Fort UAME (c. 1850, rebuilt c. 1897, see figure 29), St. Thomas A.U.M.P. (first church, c. 1827, see figure 30, and second church, c. 1877, see figure 31), St. John's A.U.M.P. (c. 1867, see figure 25), and Mt. Salem (c. 1931, see figure 23) all featured front-gable roofs, oriented towards with the road with little setback. Both Mt. Pisgah (c. 1940, see figure 24) and African Union Church of Iron Hill (c. 1852) have larger setbacks due to their rural settings but are still oriented with their gable ends facing the road. The slightly oblique orientation of the Iron Hill church is unusual but likely related to William Walker's decision to give land from the interior of his property to the church and the jog in Whittaker Road. All of the Spencer Churches had small footprints, but first period churches were slightly smaller than their second and third iterations. The original c. 1827 St. Thomas Church was a log pen measuring approximately 20 square feet. As the only known surviving first period Spencer Church, African Union Church of Iron Hill is about 20 feet by 40 feet (exclusive of additions), suggesting that it may have been transitional in size between first period log and frame churches and second and third period brick buildings. The other churches constructed after the Civil War—or reconstructed in the case of Old Fort Church—measured approximately 25 to 35 feet on their gable ends by 40 to 55 feet deep (exclusive of additions). Many of the Spencer Churches were also one story, contributing to their small scale. Wilmington's Bethany Church was the only church with a raised basement, likely to provide a social hall beneath the sanctuary, maximizing space within a confined urban setting. The Iron Hill church is unusual in that it was built with additional height to accommodate the half-story balcony constructed at the east end of the sanctuary, resulting in the building being uncharacteristically tall compared to other Spencer Churches in New Castle County.

The primary elevation of Spencer Churches of all periods usually consisted of a three-bay façade with a central front door flanked on either side by a single window, with one or two smaller windows beneath the gable. Most Spencer Churches, including African Union Church of Iron Hill, had their front entrances located at the gable end. The entrances opened directly onto the sanctuary nave with a center aisle and the pews arranged in two rows facing the pulpit. The c. 1827 St. Thomas Church likely had its original door in the gable end facing *away* from the road prior to the construction of an addition on that side of the building, indicating that there may have been greater variation in door locations among first period churches. Despite their narrow frontages, most Spencer Churches had full-size windows flanking the front door. African Union Church of Iron Hill originally featured large nine-over-nine-light windows on either side of the four-panel front door. The St. Thomas churches were the only exceptions, though the c. 1877 building may have had windows that were covered during the 1960s renovation. Iron Hill and Bethany both had larger single windows in their end gables, likely due to their one-and-a-half-story heights, while Old Fort and both St. Thomas buildings had two smaller windows beneath the gables. African Union Church of Iron Hill has a two-over-two-light window, although this may be a replacement. The Mt. Salem Church is the only Spencer Church retaining an oval ocular window. Mt. Pisgah was built with an ocular window in the front gable, though it is now covered with vinyl siding from an extensive mid-twentieth century renovation.

The side elevations of Spencer Churches were characterized by plain wall surfaces broken by regular window fenestration. Most Spencer Churches, including African Union Church of Iron Hill, had three or four evenly spaced windows on their side elevations. The c. 1877 St. Thomas Church actually decreased from four to three windows when the congregation added bathrooms on either side of the sanctuary entrance during the mid-twentieth century renovations. Exceptions to the three or four window side elevations include the c. 1827 St. Thomas Church, which likely only had one window on each side elevation of the log pen, as well as St. John's Church, which had five windows due to its unusual length. Several churches also had regular basement fenestration. Due to its raised basement, Bethany Church also had smaller windows at the basement level. These were likely positioned directly beneath the full-height sanctuary windows, though the two windows closest to the front of the building were probably modified during the 1927 renovation. The c. 1930s Mt. Salem and Mt. Pisgah Churches also had basement transom windows located beneath the sanctuary windows. Most nineteenth century Spencer Churches had flues for stoves located roughly midway along one of the side walls, while the twentieth century churches had flues located in the center of the back wall. African Union Church of Iron Hill appears to have originally had a flue located in the center of the church, but it was moved to midway along the north elevation during the early-to-mid-twentieth century.

In addition to their small scale and simple design, Spencer Churches also had minimal architectural flourishes. First period churches like the c. 1827 St. Thomas Church and the African Union Church of Iron Hill were constructed as plain vernacular houses of worship, while second and third period churches usually had enough detail to convey an architectural style. Both the c. 1827 St. Thomas Church and Iron Hill were initially clad in white weatherboard siding. Neither had any architectural ornamentation, although Iron Hill's four-panel door and slight eve returns suggests a very stripped-down vernacular Greek Revival. Second and third period churches appear to have had more architectural detail. St. John's, for example, built 15 years after the Iron Hill church and the second building constructed for the congregation, had greater Greek Revival flourishes, originally featuring full gable returns with paneled wood double doors under a multi-light transom. Old Fort Church was reconstructed with triangular transoms above the rectangular sliding sash windows to give the appearance of Gothic Revival lancet windows. Likewise, the mixture of patterned wood shingles beneath the gable also contribute to the building's folk Gothic appearance. Similarly, Mt. Salem and Mt. Pisgah were constructed with colored glass lancet windows to convey an ecclesiastical Gothic Revival aesthetic.

*Popularity of Gothic Revival Renovations*

During the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, vernacular Gothic Revival renovations increased in popularity in New Castle County's small rural Methodist churches, including Spencer Churches. Methodist churches constructed during the nineteenth century were retrofitted with simplified Gothic Revival architectural details, particularly lancet arch windows and interior furnishings. Modifying windows and interiors provided a cost-effective way for rural congregations to update their buildings to participate in the popularity of high-style Gothic Revival architecture among the churches of wealthier Methodist congregations in urban areas. Vernacular Gothic Revival renovations were prevalent among mainstream rural white Methodist congregations in New Castle County during this period. For example, in 1893, the congregation of Mt. Pleasant Methodist Episcopal Church (NR# 98001097, see figure 26) renovated the c.

1838 church building by stuccoing the exterior, constructing a vestibule, and installing leaded windows with lancet patterns. Similarly, in 1906, the Methodist congregation of Newark Union Church (NR# 100004955, see figure 27)) in Brandywine Hundred updated its c. 1845 building by stuccoing the exterior, replacing the floors and roof, building a vestibule, and installing lancet arch windows. In 1873, congregants of Mount Lebanon Methodist Episcopal Church (NR# 84000845, see figure 28), also located in Brandywine Hundred, likewise raised the roof pitch of the c. 1834 building, stuccoed the exterior, and added a Carpenter Gothic vestibule. They installed stained glass windows in 1934. Additionally, in 1922, congregants of Marshallton United Methodist Church (NR# 86002954, see figure 32), located in Mill Creek Hundred, updated their c. 1887 building in the Gothic Revival style.[32]

Several Spencer Churches, including African Union Church of Iron Hill, also participated in this regional trend of Gothic Revival renovations. Likely completed in the late 1930s, the renovations replaced the church's large nine-over-nine-light windows with smaller sliding sash windows topped with triangular transoms, imitating lancet windows of the Gothic Revival style.[33] Only the window in the gable end remained the same size with the addition of a triangular transom above it. The congregation may have been replicating the use of triangular window transoms in the 1897 reconstruction of Old Fort Church. Iron Hill's congregation also probably renovated the church's interior in the late 1930s, moving the stove to the north wall to open up space within the nave. They installed the plain white marble-topped oak altar and the mass-produced, machine-turned altar balustrade in a folk adaptation of a Gothic Revival altar. The congregation may have also acquired the pulpit seating for church leaders at this time, the chairs exhibiting a vernacular mixture of Eastlake and Gothic Revival style. The congregation installed the tapered square balcony columns, likely reconstructing the balcony around the new window transoms during the renovations. The nails and sash sawn wood from the staircase suggest that the congregation rebuilt the balcony around the original staircase. Although the tapered square columns used in the construction of the balcony were not part of the Gothic Revival aesthetic, they were widely used in the porches of a variety of popular domestic architectural forms and styles during the period, including bungalows, Craftsman-style houses, and Colonial Revival rowhouses in Wilmington. The tapered columns would have been more easily accessible to a congregation of limited financial means in comparison to traditional Gothic clustered columns. As reflected in the reconstruction of Old Fort Church in 1897, the renovation of African Union Church of Iron Hill in the late 1930s, and the construction of the Mt. Salem and Mt. Pisgah Churches in the

[32] Martha L. Daniel, Susan L. Taylor, and Rebecca J. Siders, "National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Mount Pleasant Methodist Episcopal Church and Parsonage," National Park Service, 1998, accessed March 16, 2020, https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NRHP/98001097_text; Thomas J. Walters and Valerie Cesna, "National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Mount Lebanon Methodist Episcopal Church," National Park Service, 1984, accessed March 16, 2020, https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NRHP/84000845_text; M. Elizabeth Ford and Valerie Cesna, "National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Marshallton United Methodist Church," National Park Service, 1986, accessed March 16, 2020, https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NRHP/86002945_text.

[33] The Churches of Delaware, published by photographer Frank R. Zebley in 1947, is a collection of photographs and brief histories of nearly 900 of Delaware churches, captured between about 1935 and 1947. A photograph of African Union Church of Iron Hill, then known as St. Daniel's, appears in the book with the church misattributed as an AME congregation and shows the building's exterior prior to its vernacular Gothic Revival renovations.

1930s, the vernacular Gothic Revival was popular among the congregations of Spencer Churches during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

*Spencer Church Vestibule Additions*

While vestibule additions were a common component of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century renovations in New Castle County's mainstream Methodist churches, it did not become popular at Spencer Churches like African Union Church of Iron Hill until the mid-twentieth century. The prevalence of vestibule additions—sometimes made during more Modernist renovations—suggested that Spencer Church congregations constructed vestibules for their functionality, as well as to visually convey the buildings' statuses as churches, more than to conform to a particular architectural style. For example, Mt. Salem Church's vestibule addition ultimately obscured all but the top of the building's original lancet arch-shaped doorway. Congregations often constructed their vestibule with some architectural details in keeping with the building's style, while brickwork and contemporary double doors reflect the mid-twentieth century. Examples of architectural details referencing historic church architecture included the use of shingles in the gable end of Old Fort Church's vestibule and the lancet windows used in the vestibules of Mt. Pisgah and Mt. Salem. At the same time, the congregations of Old Fort Church and Mt. Salem Church used contemporary double doors and stretcher bond brick veneer in the construction of their vestibules. Mt. Pisgah Church also constructed a stretcher bond brick vestibule with mid-century yellow brick headers and a brick cross above the open vestibule doorway. Befitting its Modern aesthetic, St. John's Church vestibule is also stretcher bond with a pair of plain aluminum double doors. Regardless of the vestibules' details, all four churches constructed small one-story vestibules spanning only the original front entrance.

The mid-1960s vestibule addition to African Union Church of Iron Hill differs from the other Spencer Churches because it spans the entire front façade, suggesting that the congregation may have constructed it, in part, to create storage space. Since the vestibule is larger than the entranceway, it enabled the congregation to store robes for the newly formed choir. While other Spencer Church congregations often turned to the construction of rear additions to accommodate bathrooms, church offices, and gathering spaces, the vestibule at Iron Hill was large enough for the congregation to later subdivide the space into two bathrooms, an office, and an antechamber. The addition of the social hall further obviated the need for a rear addition beyond the construction of the choir box. Architecturally, the vestibule adheres to the materials used in the mid-twentieth century church renovation. Like the church and choir box addition, the congregation clad the vestibule in asbestos siding and used one-over-one sliding sash windows with an applied stained glass patterned film. Similar to other Spencer Churches, Iron Hill features a contemporary double door in the vestibule addition.

*Other Mid-Twentieth Century Renovations at Iron Hill & Other Spencer Churches*

Besides new vestibules, the congregations of many Spencer Churches, including African Union Church of Iron Hill, renovated their buildings during the mid-twentieth century to update aesthetics and cover aging building materials. Like their Gothic Revival renovations of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, efforts to modernize Spencer Churches during the mid-twentieth century were vernacular and utilized popular building materials. Congregations frequently applied mid-twentieth century cladding to the exteriors of their churches to hide aging

wood weatherboard and update appearances. For example, during their 1960s renovations, the congregations of Mt. Pisgah, St. Thomas, and St. John's clad their churches in stretcher bond brick veneer, emulating the sleekness of the mid-twentieth century brick veneer churches being constructed in suburbs and small towns. Adding brick veneer also gave the buildings the appearance of greater permanence and solidity. The congregation at Iron Hill took a different approach, cladding the exterior of their building in asbestos shingles during the 1960s. Although the asbestos siding did not have the same aesthetic value as a brick veneer, it achieved similar goals—durability, weather resistance, lower cyclical maintenance than wood, and a fresher twentieth century look—at a considerably lower cost than brick. Congregations also replaced or covered their buildings' traditional wood shingle roofs with low maintenance and inexpensive asphalt shingles by the mid-twentieth century. Several congregations, including Iron Hill, St. John's, and St. Thomas, also replaced their windows with contemporary-looking, low maintenance, one-over-one sliding sashes. St. Thomas's congregation could afford stained glass windows throughout the building, while members of St. John's Church installed stained glass windows on the primary façade only. Consistent with the other cost-efficient renovations, the Iron Hill congregation mimicked this look by applying stained glass films to their windows.

The interiors of Spencer Churches were also updated in the mid-twentieth century, especially during the 1960s and 1970s. At this time, many such churches applied some form of faux wood paneling in their sanctuaries. The congregations of Iron Hill and St. Thomas fully paneled their sanctuaries (Iron Hill in the 1970s), while members of Old Fort, St. John's, and Mt. Pisgah paneled below the chair rails, showing that even some of the Spencer Church congregations who chose to keep vernacular Gothic Revival exteriors embraced mid-century faux wood interiors. Faux wood paneling became popular during the mid-to-late-twentieth century as a durable and low-maintenance interior finish that looked aesthetically pleasing with both modern and traditional interiors. The congregations that chose to panel their interiors likely did so to cover aging plaster walls and update the appearance of their sanctuaries. Several churches also replaced worn pews during mid-to-late-twentieth century renovations including Iron Hill, St. Thomas, and St. John's. Although some upholstery has since been replaced, most congregations opted for red pew cushions—including Iron Hill, St. Thomas, Mt. Pisgah, and Old Fort. Congregants from Iron Hill also painted the pews themselves red. A few congregations including Iron Hill, St. John's, Mt. Pisgah, and Old Fort also carpeted the floors in red, further reflecting the color's importance within Spencer Churches. The intended symbolism of the red interiors in Spencer churches is unclear, though various sources attribute the use of red in Protestant churches as symbolizing the blood of Christ, or more broadly, the blood of martyrs. Others indicate that the color red embodies fire, thus symbolizing the presence of God, or alternatively, love, and thus the love of God.

*Conclusion: Maintaining a Legacy (1970-today)*

During the 1970s and beyond, the Iron Hill congregation continued updates to the church's aesthetics. Most of the changes to the building were completed by congregants who had carpentry skills. In the late 1960s or early 1970s, they replaced the pews with new wooden benches. Congregant Uncle June, who had installed the faux wood paneling over the original, blue-painted plaster walls during the late 1970s, also poured the concrete sidewalk from the parking lot to the church. Additionally, during Reverend Ronald Jackson's tenure in the 1980s,

the congregation partitioned the vestibule into thirds—with an antechamber/hallway in the middle, a small office on the north side, and two bathrooms on the south side, eliminating the need for the outhouse located to the southwest of the church building. The congregation also carpeted the pulpit and choir box, in addition to installing ceiling fans and light fixtures under Jackson's leadership. In the late 1980s, the congregation replaced the balcony railing, installed the present front door, and replastered the sanctuary ceiling. In the early 1990s, during Reverend Mason's tenure, the congregation replaced the windows. The previous ones had been covered in a plastic film to make them look like stained glass and were not original to the building.[34]

The congregation also made multiple updates to the church's mechanical systems during the second half of the twentieth century. The church was heated by a single coal-burning, potbelly stove located on the north side of the sanctuary until around 1950, when the congregation switched to oil heat. The oil tank was located on the north side of the church and the heater remained in the same location as the stove. During the 1990s, the congregation replaced the oil heater with a propane powered heating system. They placed the new heating unit near the southeast corner of the sanctuary and the propane tanks outside on the building's south wall. The addition of plumbing to the building for the installation of bathrooms in the 1980s also necessitated digging a new well.[35]

By the turn of the twenty-first century, the congregation's numbers again began to decline—and the U.A.M.E. conference soon tried to close the church and consolidate the congregation with the Mt. Zion U.A.M.E. Church in nearby Newark. As a result, in 2011, most of the congregation split from the U.A.M.E. church, forming the St. Daniel's Community Church of Iron Hill to keep their own church open and its legacy alive. At that time, they had to close the church for about a year while searching for a new pastor. Yet today, St. Daniel's Community Church of Iron Hill remains a tightly knit, family-based congregation, comprised of 15 to 20 regular members. The congregation has completed some additional changes to their building since becoming an independent church, including the replacement of asphalt shingles on the roof around 2017 and new carpeting in the sanctuary nave around 2018. The congregation also sold all but one of the mid-twentieth century pews in 2019, replacing the seating with new chairs, for comfort.[36] The congregation remains keenly aware of the legacy they maintain, sustaining a Spencer-era church building and cemetery established at a time when free Black communities existed alongside race-based slavery in Delaware.

[34] Earl, et. al, interview by Fesak and Morrissey.
[35] Earl, et. al, interview by Fesak and Morrissey.
[36] Earl, et. al, interview by Fesak and Morrissey; New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, 20110225-0011109.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

1830-1940 United States Federal Census Records. *Pencader Hundred, New Castle, Delaware.* [database on-line]. Ancestry.com. Provo, UT, USA.

1850-1860 United States Federal Census Records -Slave Schedules. *New Castle, Delaware.* [database on-line]. Ancestry.com. Provo, UT, USA.

Beers, D. G. *Atlas of the State of Delaware*. Philadelphia: Pomeroy & Beers, 1868. Hundreds Maps. https://www.dgs.udel.edu/delaware-1868-hundreds-maps.

Cooper, Constance J. and Lewis V. Baldwin. *Forging Faith, Building Freedom: African American Faith Experiences in Delaware, 1800-1980.* Dover, DE: Delaware Heritage Press, 2015.

Daniel, Martha L., Susan L. Taylor, and Rebecca J. Siders. "National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Mount Pleasant Methodist Episcopal Church and Parsonage." National Park Service. 1998. Accessed March 16, 2020. https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NRHP/98001097_text.

"Diverse Faith Communities." Delaware Historical Society. Accessed February 25, 2020. https://dehistory.org/diverse-faith-communities.

Earl, William, Charles Webster, Stanley Earl, Allen Smith, Jr., Jerry Earl, Alice Presberry, and Betty Webster. Interview by Mary Fesak and Catherine Morrissey. St. Daniel's Community Church of Iron Hill, Newark, Delaware. February 22, 2020.

Ford, M. Elizabeth and Valerie Cesna. "National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Marshallton United Methodist Church." National Park Service. 1986. Accessed March 16, 2020. https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NRHP/86002945_text.

Historical Orthophotography, New Castle County GIS, 1937-2013.

"History of Pencader Presbyterian Church Historical address delivered on the occasion of the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Woman's Missionary Society." Glasgow, DE: Pencader Presbyterian Church Women's Missionary Society, 1899. Digitized by Forgotten Books.

Hungerford, Austin N. "The Old Abbington Iron Works in New Castle County, Delaware." *The Bulletin of the American Iron and Steel Association* 21, no. 21 (June 22, 1887). Accessed February 12, 2020. Google Books.

https://books.google.com/books?id=2LY2AQAAMAAJ&lpg=PA161&ots=nNxY-Y_S5b&dq=david%20c%20wood%20iron%20hill&pg=PA161#v=onepage&q=david%20c%20wood%20iron%20hill&f=false.

"John J. Salminen." *The Morning News.* April 1, 1950.

Johnson, Donna. Interview by Catherine Morrissey. 2860 Ogletown Rd., Newark, Delaware. September 28, 2020.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses.* New York: Knopf, 2011.

Munroe, John Andrew. *History of Delaware.* 5th ed. Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2006.

"National Register of Historic Places Registration: Old Fort Church." National Park Service. 1983. Accessed March 11, 2020. https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NRHP/83001402_text.

New Castle County Recorder of Deeds. *Delaware, Land Records, 1677-1947* [database on-line]. Ancestry.com. Provo, UT, USA.

Norton, Joan M. "National Register of Historic Places Registration: Andrew Fisher House." National Park Service. October 1972. Accessed February 12, 2020. https://npgallery.nps.gov/GetAsset/16309001-2307-4ed7-ac76-d1ed73d591e8.

"Olli Salminen." *The News Journal*. October 29, 2015.

Orr, David. "An African American Union Soldier Remembered: James Ebert and the African Union Church Cemetery in Polktown, Delaware." In *Archaeologies of African American Life in the Upper Mid-Atlantic.* Edited by Michael J. Gall and Richard F. Veit. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2017.

"Our History." Mt. Pisgah UAME Church Middletown. July 30, 2018. Accessed March 11, 2020. https://www.facebook.com/pg/MtPisgahUAMEChurchMiddletown/about/?ref=page_internal.

Owen, James Richardson and James Bishop Owen. *A History of the Iron Hill Area, Newark, Delaware.* Newark, DE: Newark Chamber of Commerce, 1967.

Parish, Mrs. Preston. "National Register of Historic Places Registration: Principio Furnace." National Park Service. July 1969. Accessed February 25, 2020. https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/NR_PDFs/NR-74.pdf.

Rea, Samuel M. and Jacob Price. *Map of New Castle County, Delaware from original surveys.*

Philadelphia: Smith and Wistar, 1849. Map. https://lccn.loc.gov/2013593084.

*Records of the Welsh Tract Baptist Meeting, Pencader Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware 1701 to 1828.* Wilmington: Historical Society of Delaware, 1904. Digitized by Princeton Theological Seminary Library. https://archive.org/details/recordsofwelshtr00wels/page/n8/mode/2up.

Sheppard, Rebecca J., Anna Andrzejewski, and Deidra C. McCarthy. "The House and Garden in Central Delaware, 1780-1930+/-." Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, 1992. http://udspace.udel.edu/handle/19716/4900.

Sheppard, Rebecca J., et al. "Reconstructing Delaware's Free Black Communities, 1800-1870." Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware. September 27, 2010.

"Sketch of Churches and Ecclesiastical Organizations among the People of Color." *Colored American.* October 21, 1837.

"St. John's Church, Conclusion." University of Delaware Department of Art Conservation. Accessed March 11, 2020. https://www.artcons.udel.edu/outreach/diversity-initiatives/new-london-road/st-john-church.

Walters, Thomas J. and Valerie Cesna. "National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Mount Lebanon Methodist Episcopal Church." National Park Service. 1984. Accessed March 16, 2020. https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NRHP/84000845_text.

Wilmore, Dorothy E. *Peter Spencer's Movement: Exploring the History of the Union American Methodist Episcopal Church.* Wilmington, DE: Village Printing, 2001.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
____ previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

**Primary location of additional data:**

____ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
__X_ University
____ Other
Name of repository: Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DE CRS# N04033**

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** _0.92 acres_____

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)
1. Latitude: 39.63 Longitude: -75.76

2. Latitude: Longitude:

3. Latitude: Longitude:

4. Latitude: Longitude:

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)
The boundaries for the National Register nomination follow the property boundaries for New Castle County tax parcel # 1101300007.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
The boundary includes the land historically associated with the church as well as the 1922 and 1949 expansions of the grounds.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Mary C. Fesak (primary author); Michael J. Emmons, Jr. & Catherine Morrissey (contributors)
organization: Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware
street & number: 331 Alison Hall, University of Delaware
city or town: Newark state: DE zip code: 19716
e-mail cmorriss@udel.edu
telephone: (302) 831-8097
date: October 7, 2020

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

## Delaware Cultural Resource Survey Information

**Time Period:** 1830-1880+/- Early Industrialization; 1880-1940+/- Industrialization and Early Urbanization

**Geographic Zone:** Upper Peninsula

**Historic Period Theme(s):** Religion; Architecture, Engineering and Decorative Arts; Settlement Patterns and Demographic Changes

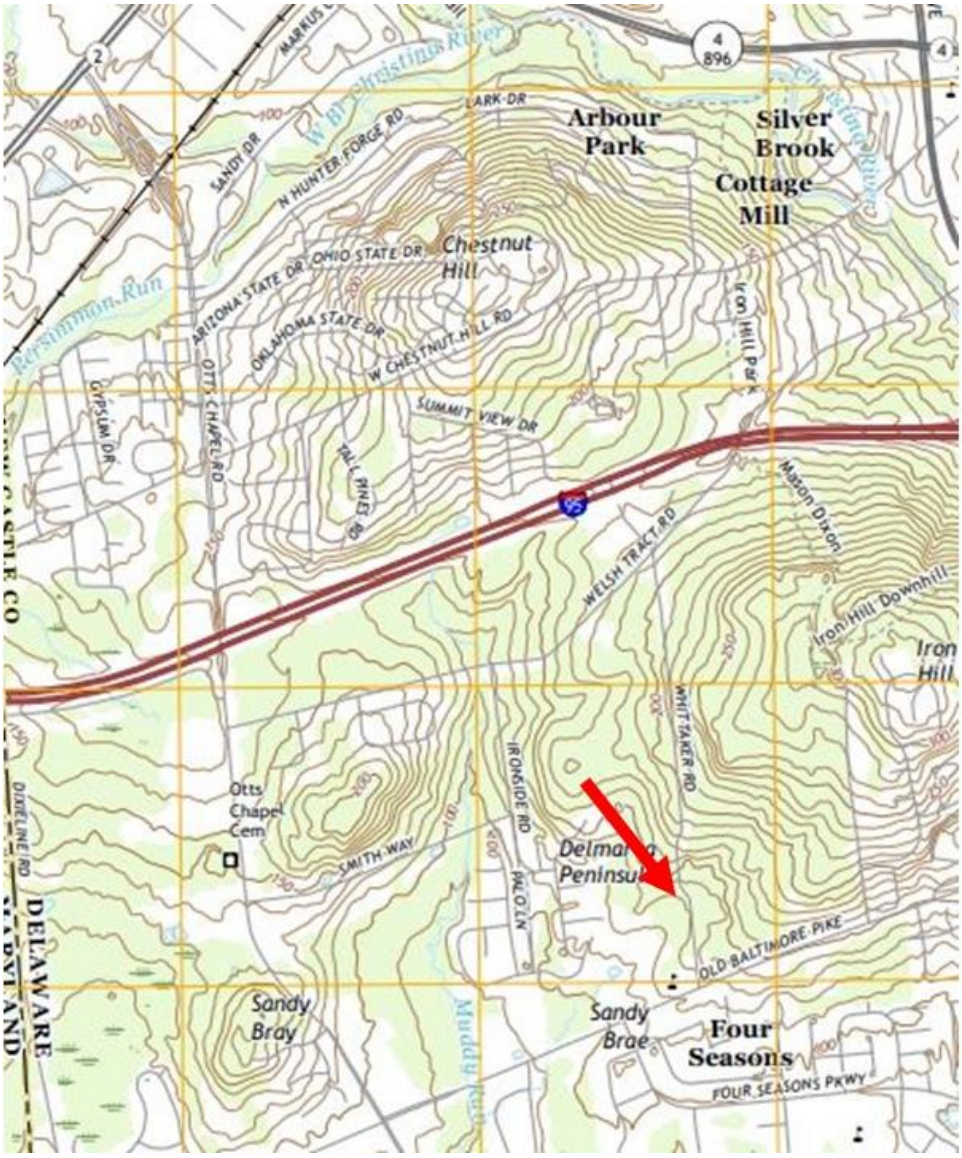
**Correlation with State Historic Preservation Plan 2018-2022**

**Goal 1:** Strengthen/Expand Delaware's Core Federal/State Historic Preservation Program

**Strategy 7:** Address gaps and biases in the state's inventory of historic properties

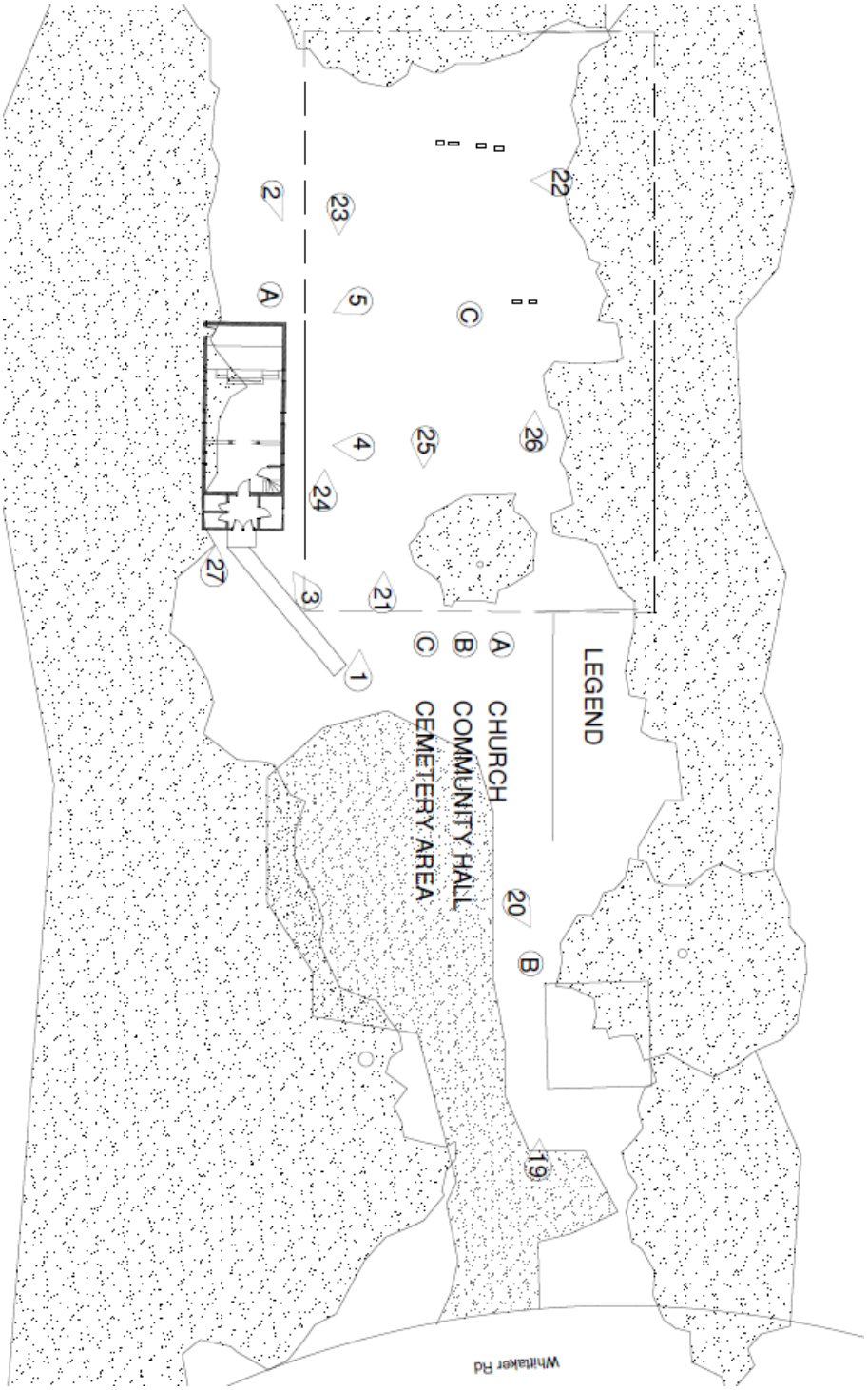
**African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill (Parcel #1101300007), New Castle County Tax Parcel Map.**

**USGS Quad Map, 7.5 Minute, Newark West, 2016 ed. (Coordinates Lat: 39.63, Long: -75.76)**



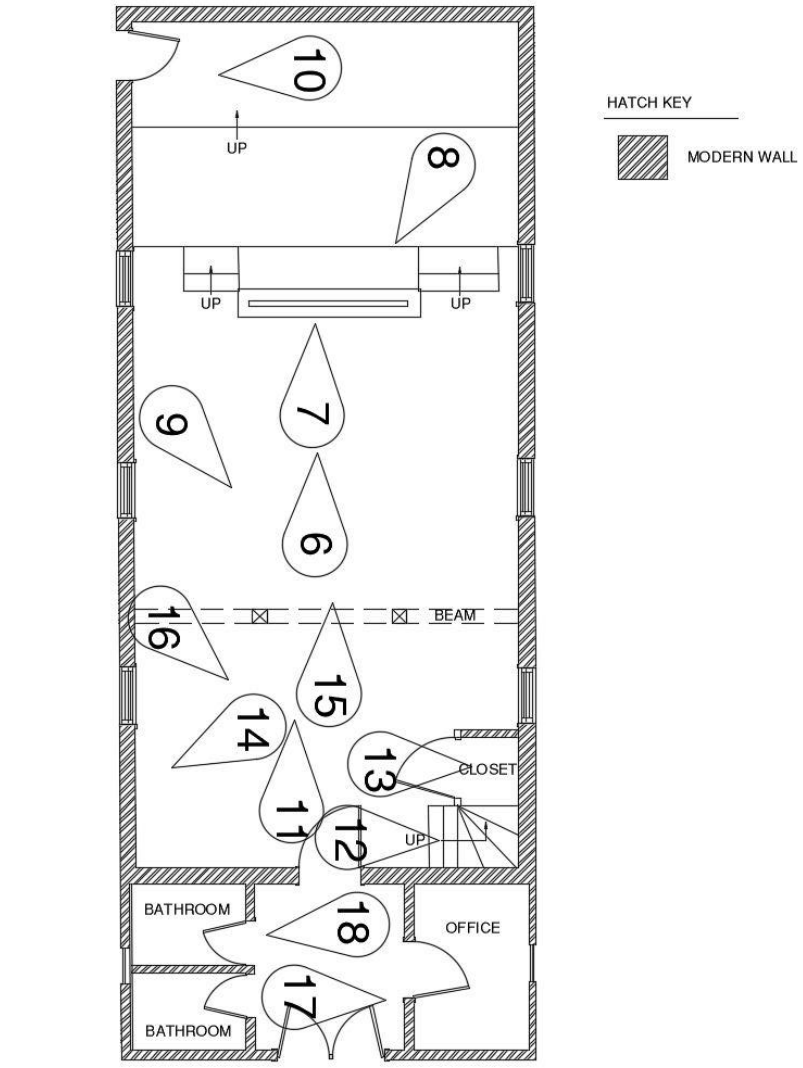
African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill — New Castle County, DE
Name of Property — County and State

**Photo key of African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill exterior and site. Drawn by J. Magee, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, 2018.**



African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill — New Castle County, DE
Name of Property — County and State

**Photo key of African Union Church of Iron Hill interior. Drawn by J. Magee, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, 2018.**



## Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill

City or Vicinity: Newark Vicinity

County: New Castle County State: Delaware

Photographer: Mary Fesak and Kimberley Showell

Date Photographed: November 2018 and December 2019

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_001)
Environmental view of the church and cemetery, looking west.

2 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_002)
Environmental view of the church and cemetery, looking northeast.

3 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_003)
Perspective view of the north and east elevations of the church, looking southwest.

4 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_004)
View of the north elevation of the church, looking south.

5 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_005)
Perspective view of the north and west elevations of the church, looking southeast.

6 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_006)
View of interior of the church showing the altar, pulpit, and choir box, looking west.

7 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_007)
Detail view of the altar and altar railing, looking west.

8 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_008)

View of interior of the church showing sanctuary nave and balcony, looking southeast.

9 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_009)
View of interior of the church showing balcony columns, stairs, and furnace screen, looking northeast.

10 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_010)
View of interior of the church showing choir box addition, looking south.

11 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_011)
View of interior of the church from the front entry showing the nave, balcony columns, altar, and pulpit, looking west.

12 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_012)
View of interior of the church showing balcony stairs and closet beneath stairs, looking north.

13 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_013)
Detail view of closet under balcony stairs showing sash saw marks and machine cut nails, looking north.

14 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_014)
Detail view of single remaining mid-twentieth century pew, looking southeast.

15 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_015)
Interior view of the altar, pulpit, and choir box from the balcony, looking west.

16 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_016)
Interior view of the balcony, looking northeast.

17 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_017)
Interior view of the vestibule and office, looking northwest.

18 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_018)
Interior view of the vestibule and bathrooms, looking south.

19 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_019)
Perspective view of south and east elevations of the social hall, looking northwest.

20 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_020)
Perspective view of south and west elevations of the social hall, looking northeast.

21 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_021)
Environmental view of the cemetery, looking east.

22 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_022)
Detail view of the grave marker of World War I veteran Private Herman Wellington Taylor.

23 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_023)
View of the grave marker of Civil War Veteran Private Frederick Wright, with additional markers from the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries in the background, looking east.

24 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_024)
View of grave markers from the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries set close to the north elevation of the church, looking west, with more modern markers in the far background, to the northwest.

25 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_025)
View of two different variety of early-twentieth century grave markers, looking east.

26 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_026)
Detail view of the grave marker of Cecilia and Samuel James, which may be a more modern marble stone replacing an earlier, possibly impermanent, marker.

27 of 27 (DE_New Castle County_African Union Church and Cemetery of Iron Hill_027)
Detail view of the church's date stone, now located at the northeast corner of the vestibule, reading "ST. DANIELS / 1838 1927 / U.A.M.E. CHURCH" with the "U." all but entirely worn and illegible.